

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 2256

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, PO
SUBJECT: AZORES BASE NEGOTIATIONS: DEFENSE MINISTER COMMENTS

SUMMARY: DEFENSE MINISTER FIRMINO MIGUEL AGREES ON THE
NEED FOR PROMPT REVIEW OF THE AZORES BASE AGREEMENT. HE
THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THAT THE PEOPLE -- ESPECIALLY THE
AZOREANS -- MIGHT NOT UNDERSTAND A MILITARY QUID
EQUALLING THE ECONOMIC ONE. I SUSPECT WE WILL SEE
INCREASING PRESSURE TO UP THE ECONOMIC SIDE OF THE
QUID. END SUMMARY.

1. AGREEMENT ON BASE: I RAISED AZORES BASE NEGOTIATIONS
MARCH 27, DURING MY INITIAL CALL ON DEFENSE MINISTER
COL. FIRMINO MIGUEL. STRESSED NEED FOR PROMPT ACTION
WHICH I NOTED WAS DESIRABLE FROM BOTH OUR POINTS OF
VIEW. MIGUEL READILY AGREED, ADDING THAT THERE WAS NO
DOUBT ON GOP SIDE THAT BASE USAGE WAS TO CONTINUE

2. AZOREANS: MIGUEL POINTED OUT (AS HAVE OTHERS TO
ME) NEED FOR GOP TO HANDLE AZOREANS WITH TACT AND
SENSITIVITY. HE SAID THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE
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SEPARATISTS REPRESENTED A REAL THREAT, BUT IT WAS
IMPORTANT FOR GOP NOT TO GIVE THEM ANY OPENINGS.
HENCE, THE NEED FOR THE GOP TO BRING THE AZOREAN
REGIONAL GOVERNMENT ALONG. HE RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER,
THIS PROCESS WAS A SLOW ONE AND AGAIN ASSURED ME HE
WOULD SEEK TO MOVE THINGS FORWARD.

3. MILITARY QUID: IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY AS TO WHERE MATTERS STOOD RE QUID, MIGUEL REPLIED THERE MIGHT BE A PROBLEM IF THE MILITARY QUID WAS AS LARGE AS THE ECONOMIC PACKAGE FOR THE AZORES. THE COUNTRY WAS IN FINANCIAL STRAITS AND PEOPLE -- ESPECIALLY THE AZOREANS -- MIGHT NOT UNDERSTAND A MILITARY QUID EQUALLING THE ECONOMIC ONE. HE STRESSED THIS WAS HIS PERSONAL VIEW, THAT THE PRESIDENT AND SOARES HAD NOT YET DECIDED THE ISSUE.

4. COMMENT: MIGUEL IS AN ASTUTE OBSERVER. HIS READING OF PUBLIC RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT A MILITARY QUID EQUAL TO THE ECONOMIC QUID SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. OUR ATTACHES HAVE HEARD SIMILAR COMMENT FROM OTHER WELL PLACED MILITARY MEN, ESPECIALLY THOSE CLOSE TO AIR FORCE CHIEF LEMOS FERREIRA. I SUSPECT WE WILL SEE INCREASING PRESSURE AS WE MOVE CLOSER TO AGREEMENT TO UP THE ECONOMIC SIDE OF THE QUID.
BLOOMFIELD

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